IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for providing redundancy for telecommunication switches (telecom switches) receiving control signal data from a control network and bearer traffic data from a bearer traffic network, said system comprising:

a primary telecom switch, said primary telecom switch having a primary I/O board for transmitting and receiving data, said primary I/O board having communicating relationships through: i) a control signal connection; ii) a bearer traffic connection; and iii) a primary redundancy connection, said primary telecom switch having a primary processing board for processing said data; and

a secondary telecom switch, said secondary telecom switch having a secondary I/O board for transmitting and receiving data, said secondary I/O board having communicating relationships through: i) a control signal connection; and ii) a secondary redundancy connection in communicating relationship with said primary redundancy connection, said secondary telecom switch having a secondary processing board for processing said data, wherein said secondary telecom switch assumes the role of said primary telecom switch in the event that said primary processing board becomes unavailable, said secondary telecom switch communicating with said bearer traffic network through said redundancy connections and said primary I/O board.

2. (New) The system as in claim 1, wherein said telecom switches are converged services platforms (CSPs).

3. (New) The system as in claim 1, wherein said bearer traffic network is a circuit-switched public switched telephone network (PSTN).

4. (New) The system as in claim 1, wherein said bearer traffic network is a packet-switched Internet Protocol (IP) network.

5. (New) The system as in claim 1, wherein said bearer traffic connections are a port type selected from the group consisting of: T1, E1, J1, and DS3.

6. (New) The system as in claim 1, further comprising: a memory storing programming to delineate port types of said bearer traffic connections.

7. (New) The system as in claim 1, wherein said redundancy connection comprises one or more cables.

8. (New) The system as in claim 1, wherein said redundancy connection is keyed to prevent improper engagement.

9. (New) The system as in claim 1, further comprising: a connection detect signal provided on said redundancy connection, which indicates the availability of connection between said primary and secondary telecom switches.

10. (New) The system as in claim 9, wherein said primary telecom switch asserts mastership in the event said connection detect signal indicates an unavailable connection.

11. (New) The system as in claim 9, wherein said secondary telecom switch releases mastership in the event said connection detect signal indicates an unavailable connection.

12. (New) The system as in claim 1, further comprising: a connection detect signal located on said redundancy connection, wherein said redundancy connection comprises one or more cables, and wherein said connection detect signal is provided on substantially all of said one or more redundancy connection cables.

13. (New) The system as in claim 1, wherein said secondary telecom switch receives bearer traffic data regardless of whether said primary telecom switch is available or unavailable.

14. (New) The system as in claim 1, further comprising: unique identifications (IDs) on each of said primary and secondary processing and I/O boards.

15. (New) The system as in claim 14, wherein said IDs are used for system configuration.

16. (New) The system as in claim 14, wherein said IDs are used for product verification.

17. (New) The system as in claim 14, wherein said IDs are used for licensing purposes.

18. (New) The system as in claim 1, further comprising: a mastership signal communicated between said primary and secondary telecom switches.

19. (New) The system as in claim 18, wherein said secondary telecom switch asserts mastership in the event that said mastership signal indicates that said primary telecom switch is unavailable.

20. (New) The system as in claim 1, wherein said primary and secondary telecom switches are configured to issue a request for mastership, check for adjacent masters, and, if so, enter a pending state until releasing said request, and if not, assert mastership.

21. (New) The system as in claim 20, further comprising: an arbitration timer, said requesting switch waiting for said arbitration timer to expire prior to asserting mastership.

22. (New) The system as in claim 21, wherein said primary telecom switch has an arbitration timer that is set at less time than an arbitration timer of said secondary telecom switch.

23. (New) A method for providing redundancy for telecommunication switches (telecom switches) said method comprising the steps of:

communicating, at a primary and secondary telecom switch, control signal data with a control network over primary and secondary control signal connections on a primary and secondary I/O board, respectively;

communicating, at said primary telecom switch, bearer traffic data with a bearer traffic network over primary bearer traffic connections on said primary I/O board;

communicating, at said secondary telecom switch, bearer traffic data with said bearer traffic network over a secondary redundancy connection on said secondary I/O board in communicating relationship with a primary redundancy connection on said primary I/O board;

processing said control signal data and said bearer traffic data on a primary and secondary processing board on said primary and secondary telecom switches, respectively; and

in the event that said primary processing board becomes unavailable, assuming, at said secondary telecom switch, the role of said primary telecom switch, said secondary telecom switch communicating with said bearer traffic network through said redundancy connections and said primary I/O board.

24. (New) The method as in claim 23, wherein said telecom switches are converged services platforms (CSPs).

25. (New) The method as in claim 23, wherein said bearer traffic network is a circuit-switched public switched telephone network (PSTN).

26. (New) The method as in claim 23, wherein said bearer traffic network is a packet-switched Internet Protocol (IP) network.

27. (New) The method as in claim 23, wherein said bearer traffic connections are a port type selected from the group consisting of: T1, E1, J1, and DS3.

28. (New) The method as in claim 23, further comprising the step of: delineating port types of said bearer traffic connections with programming stored on a memory.

29. (New) The method as in claim 23, wherein said redundancy connection comprises one or more cables.

30. (New) The method as in claim 23, wherein said redundancy connection is keyed to prevent improper engagement.

31. (New) The method as in claim 23, further comprising the step of: communicating a connection detect signal over said redundancy connection, which indicates the availability of connection between said primary and secondary telecom switches.

32. (New) The method as in claim 31, further comprising the step of: asserting mastership at said primary telecom switch in the event said connection detect signal indicates an unavailable connection.

33. (New) The method as in claim 31, further comprising the step of: releasing mastership at said secondary telecom switch in the event said connection detect signal indicates an unavailable connection.

34. (New) The method as in claim 23, further comprising the step of: communicating a connection detect signal over said redundancy connection, wherein said redundancy connection comprises one or more cables, and wherein said connection detect signal is communicated over substantially all of said one or more redundancy connection cables.

35. (New) The method as in claim 23, further comprising the step of: receiving bearer traffic data at said secondary telecom switch regardless of whether said primary telecom switch is available or unavailable.

36. (New) The method as in claim 23, further comprising the step of: providing unique identifications (IDs) on each of said primary and secondary processing and I/O boards.

37. (New) The method as in claim 36, further comprising the step of: using said IDs for system configuration.

38. (New) The method as in claim 36, further comprising the step of: using said IDs for product verification.

39. (New) The method as in claim 36, further comprising the step of: using said IDs for licensing purposes.

40. (New) The method as in claim 23, further comprising the step of: communicating a mastership signal between said primary and secondary telecom switches.

41. (New) The method as in claim 40, further comprising the step of: asserting mastership at said secondary telecom switch in the event that said mastership signal indicates that said primary telecom switch is unavailable.

42. (New) The method as in claim 23, further comprising the steps of:

issuing a request for mastership;

checking for adjacent masters; and

if a master is found, entering a pending state until releasing said request, and if no master is found, asserting mastership.

43. (New) The method as in claim 42, further comprising the step of: waiting for an arbitration timer to expire prior to asserting mastership.

44. (New) The method as in claim 43, wherein said primary telecom switch has an arbitration timer that is less time than an arbitration timer of said secondary telecom switch.

45. (New) A system for providing redundancy for telecommunication switches (telecom switches) receiving control signal data from a control network and bearer traffic data from a bearer traffic network, said system comprising:

means for communicating, at a primary and secondary telecom switch, control signal data with a control network over primary and secondary control signal connections on a primary and secondary I/O board, respectively;

means for communicating, at said primary telecom switch, bearer traffic data with a bearer traffic network over primary bearer traffic connections on said primary I/O board;

means for communicating, at said secondary telecom switch, bearer traffic data with said bearer traffic network over a secondary redundancy connection on said secon-

dary I/O board in communicating relationship with a primary redundancy connection on said primary I/O board;

means for processing said control signal data and said bearer traffic data on a primary and secondary processing board on said primary and secondary telecom switches, respectively; and

in the event that said primary processing board becomes unavailable, means for assuming, at said secondary telecom switch, the role of said primary telecom switch, said secondary telecom switch communicating with said bearer traffic network through said redundancy connections and said primary I/O board.